

Message Text

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SUBJECT: 104TH EXBD, AGENDA ITEM 4.2, (20 C/5), NATURAL
SCIENCES

1. THE FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS PERTAIN TO PARAGRAPH 2002,
THE PROPOSED GENERAL RESOLUTION ON NATURAL SCIENCES.

A. OPERATIVE PARA 4: USDEL MAY PROPOSE CHANGING QUOTE TO

DEVELOP COOPERATION BY UNESCO WITH ITS MEMBERS UNQUOTE TO
QUOTE TO FACILITATE COOPERATION AMONG THE MEMBER STATES OF
UNESCO UNQUOTE.

B. OPERATIVE PARA 5: USDEL MAY PROPOSE THAT THIS PARAGRAPH
BE CHANGED TO READ QUOTE TO STRENGTHEN THE ORGANIZATION'S
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ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT, BY PROMOTING INTERNATIONAL
AND REGIONAL EXCHANGE AND THE DISSEMINATION OF SCIENTIFIC
AND TECHNOLOGICAL INFORMATION UNQUOTE.

C. USDEL MAY PROPOSE THAT THE FOLLOWING BE ADDED AS
OPERATIVE PARAGRAPH 8 (BEGIN QUOTE): TO CONTINUE TO
STRENGTHEN THE PROGRAM FOR PERIODIC EVALUATION OF UNESCO'S

PROGRAMS IN THE FIELD OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, AND REPORTING OF THE EVALUATIONS TO MEMBER STATES, IN ORDER TO ENSURE THAT PROJECTS OF MAXIMUM INTEREST AND SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACT ARE BEING INITIATED, DEVELOPED, AND IMPLEMENTED, AND TO DETERMINE WHEN UNESCO RESOURCES SHOULD BE REALLOCATED." (END QUOTE).

2. TALKING POINTS

RE. A. THE ORIGINAL WORDING GIVES THE IMPRESSION THAT UNESCO CONSIDERS ITSELF A SEPARATE ACTOR ON THE INTERNATIONAL SCENE, WITH ITS OWN WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE, RATHER THAN A MECHANISM FOR ENABLING MEMBER STATES TO LEARN TOGETHER AND WITH EACH OTHER. OUR PROPOSED CHANGE WOULD MAKE CLEAR THAT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH ITS CONSTITUTION, UNESCO'S MISSION IS TO PROMOTE COOPERATION BETWEEN MEMBER STATES.

RE. B. 19 C/5 CONTAINED A SIMILAR PARAGRAPH, WHICH DID NOT, HOWEVER, SPECIFICALLY RELATE S AND T INFORMATION TO DEVELOPMENT. THE U.S. FULLY SUPPORTS UNESCO'S INTENT IN INSERTING A REFERENCE TO DEVELOPMENT INTO THIS SECTION OF THE 20 C/5 RESOLUTION. HOWEVER, THE ORIGINAL WORDING OF THE DRAFT IMPLIES A PREJUDGMENT AS TO WHICH SPECIFIC S AND T FINDINGS WILL CONTRIBUTE TO DEVELOPMENT. THE HISTORY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY HAS CONSISTENTLY DEMON-

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STRATED THAT IT IS NOT GIVEN TO MANKIND TO HAVE THE PRE-SCIENCE TO PREDICT IN WHAT DIRECTIONS ANY PARTICULAR RESEARCH EFFORT WILL LEAD. WE CANNOT IDENTIFY BEFORE THE FACT THE SOURCE FROM WHICH WILL SPRING THE NEXT DRAMATIC BREAKTHROUGH, WHICH MAY SOLVE A PRESSING PROBLEM OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT. INDEED, IT IS THE NATURE OF S AND T THAT TYPICALLY THE PRACTICAL SOLUTION TO A PROBLEM HAS NOT ONE SINGLE SOURCE, BUT DRAWS ON A WIDE RANGE OF DISCOVERIES, PREVIOUSLY THOUGHT UNRELATED. FREQUENTLY THE CONTRIBUTING DISCOVERIES CUT ACROSS THE BOUNDARIES OF SCIENTIFIC DISCIPLINES AND INTERNATIONAL BORDERS. WHAT APPEARS AT THIS MOMENT TO RELATE MOST DIRECTLY TO DEVELOPMENT MAY ULTIMATELY PROVE MUCH MORE LIMITED IN ITS BENEFITS THAN SOME APPARENTLY ESOTERIC DISCOVERY WHICH MAY JUST POSSIBLY BE THE CATALYST FOR A REVOLUTIONARY NEW TECHNOLOGY. THE BEST WAY UNESCO CAN PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT, NOT JUST TODAY BUT FOR THE FUTURE, IS BY SUPPORTING THE FULLEST EXCHANGE AND DISSEMINATION OF S AND T INFORMATION.

RE. C. (I) A SUGGESTION REGARDING PERIODIC EVALUATION WAS INCLUDED IN THE GENERAL RESOLUTION ON NATURAL SCIENCES IN THE 19 C/5. THE U.S. IS PERPLEXED TO FIND THIS

EMPHASIS DELETED FROM THE CURRENT PROPOSED RESOLUTION.

(II) ALL THE U.S. GROUPS PARTICIPATING IN UNESCO-SPONSORED SCIENCE ACTIVITIES HAVE IDENTIFIED EVALUATION AND PROGRAM REVIEW AS A NUMBER ONE PRIORITY.

IMPORTANCE OF OBJECTIVE PROGRAM EVALUATION. THE BUREAUS OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL PROGRAMS OF MAB, IHP, IGCP AND IOC HAVE ALL ESPOUSED EVALUATION AS THE KEY TO EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF THEIR PROGRAMS.

(IV) EVALUATION OF ONGOING ACTIVITIES IS AN INDISPENSABLE COMPONENT OF ANY SERIOUS EFFORT TO STRENGTHEN UNESCO. GIVEN FINITE RESOURCES, DATA ON PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS ARE ESSENTIAL TO THE DETERMINATION OF PRIORITIES, AND PROVIDE UNCLASSIFIED

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A RATIONAL BASIS ON WHICH TO MAKE DECISIONS TO INITIATE, TERMINATE, CONTINUE, CONSOLIDATE, OR EXPAND PROJECTS.

(V) THE EVALUATION REPORTS MUST BE MADE AVAILABLE TO THE MEMBER STATES, SO THAT THEY CAN MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS ON PROGRAM BUDGET PROPOSALS.

(VI) TO IMPROVE COST-EFFECTIVENESS, IN VIEW OF UNESCO'S LIMITED FUNDS AND HIGH OVERHEAD COSTS (TWO-THIRDS OF UNESCO'S BUDGET), UNESCO SHOULD FOCUS ITS RESOURCES ON ACTIVITIES WHICH IT IS UNIQUELY QUALIFIED TO PERFORM.

(VII) (IF USDEL DEEMS IT USEFUL TO GIVE EXAMPLES OF PROGRAMS NEEDING EVALUATION): THE U.S. BELIEVES THAT AN EVALUATION OF THE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY POLICY PROGRAM MIGHT POSSIBLY REVEAL THAT THE PROGRAM IS NOT VERY USEFUL TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. WE THINK THE PROGRAM IS CUR-

RENTLY HEADED IN A DIRECTION WHICH IS NOT VERY PRODUCTIVE, AND WOULD THEREFORE BE INCLINED TO FAVOR REALLOCATING RESOURCES FROM SCIENCE POLICY TO PROJECTS WHERE THE NEED IS MORE URGENT AND THE COST-BENEFIT RATIO MORE FAVORABLE. TWO LIKELY CANDIDATES FOR INCREASED SUPPORT, IN OUR VIEW, ARE IGCP AND RESEARCH INTO THE ECOLOGY OF TROPICAL FORESTS. VANCE

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